

**STATEMENT OF CONGRESSMAN BOB WISE OF WEST VIRGINIA
BEFORE
THE HOUSE GOVERNMENT REFORM AND OVERSIGHT
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL ECONOMIC GROWTH, NATURAL
RESOURCES AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS**

“CLEAN AIR COMMON SENSE ACT“

APRIL 23, 1998

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Subcommittee, I want to thank you for the **opportunity** to testify before you today about global warming and how it is affecting America.

Global warming is an phenomenon which influences all American's lives both directly and indirectly. It is the rise in the earth's average climate temperature due to the build-up of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. It is argued that in the future rising levels of greenhouse gases could pose serious threats like flooding, drought and disease.

Indeed, the earth's atmosphere today is not the same as it was 100 years ago. The world climate is changing and the United States must do its part to control its emission of greenhouse gases. But we must approach this in a sound and rational manner. That is why I have introduced legislation which addresses one of the contributors to greenhouse gases, Nitrogen Oxide (NO_x).

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Subcommittee, as you know, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is one of the major government agencies whose mission is to help protect American citizens and interests from environmental dangers. Recently, the EPA proposed a plan to reduce the amount of NO_x that the United States releases. I commend the EPA for "stepping up to bat" and taking the initiative to propose such an action. However, I **strongly disagree** with the way in which the EPA intends to reach its goal of NO_x emission reduction.

The EPA has decided to target my state, West Virginia, and 21 other states and the District of Columbia as predominant sources of NO_x emissions. Additionally, the EPA is claiming that we are the reason many Northeast states can't reach current emissions compliance levels. The EPA's proposal would require West Virginia to reduce NO_x emissions by an additional 44 percent from

reductions already mandated by law. West Virginia would be the single hardest-hit state by the proposal if it is put in place as written. One estimate says that my state could lose more than 11,400 manufacturing jobs. Other states face the prospect of similar consequences.

In reaching its proposals, the EPA ignored recommendations by the Ozone Transport Assessment Group (OTAG) -- a partnership between the EPA, the Environmental Council of the States and various industry and environmental groups. Endorsed by the EPA, OTAG was convened to study how **NOx** and other chemicals that affect ozone in the United States travel from one place to another. It found that **NOx** emissions only affect locations within a 150 mile radius of their source. The group said that a community's air quality is not affected by emissions from locations 500 miles or more away. Translation: emissions from West Virginia, the mid-west or the south do not affect air quality in Hartford, Connecticut, 527 miles away, in Portland, Maine, 691 miles away or in Boston, Massachusetts, 621 miles away.

My legislation, would require the EPA to rewrite its proposed changes in air quality standards, **not** eliminate them. It seeks to balance the security of West Virginia and other state's jobs with a continued clean environment. My bill

requires the EPA to give the states one year to develop new modeling and collect further data to share with the EPA. This is consistent with the EPA's June 1997 promise that the states participating in OTAG would have up to 12 months to conduct their own modeling and provide comments to EPA. Lastly, my bill will set the compliance date five years **after** the final rule is promulgated. This to is consistent with EPA's proposed compliance deadline.

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Subcommittee, I am not opposed to emissions reductions. There is a global climate change taking place and we need to reduce emissions in this country and around the world. Much needs to be done to reduce the effects of global warming. However, we need to be cautious when determining the sources of global warming and placing blame. The greatest tragedy would be if we did all that the EPA is currently asking and after all the job losses, the air in the northeast states was no cleaner than it is today. We need a common-sense approach to reducing emissions and greenhouse gases that are based on science -- not speculation.

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